

**MINUTES OF THE**  
**SYBIL BRAND COMMISSION FOR INSTITUTIONAL INSPECTIONS**  
**REGULAR WEEKLY MEETING**  
**MARCH 2, 2005**

**CALL TO ORDER**

In the absence of a quorum, Chair Montano called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. as a Committee of the Whole.

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Chair Montano led the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

**ATTENDANCE**

**Present:**

Chair Eleanor R. Montano  
Vice Chair Helen H. Stathatos  
Vito Cannella  
Carl Moore

**Others**

Lee Millen, Senior Staff,  
Commission Services  
Twila Kerr, Commission Services  
Jessica Gama, Ombudsperson,  
Probation Department

**Absent**

Frank Bacio  
James Cragin  
John Hammargren

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, and February 23, 2005**

The approval of the Minutes of February 16, and February 23, 2005 was deferred to the next Commission meeting.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Montano noted that a preferred change to the Group Homes Zip Code list would include the captions: Executive Director, Group Home Investigator, telephone number, RCL #, and the Sex.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The balance of the Commission's Charitable Fund is \$725.96.

## **STAFF REPORT**

Jessica Gama, Ombudsperson, Probation Department, introduced herself, and noted that she had previously worked in a group home, as a social worker, and in substance abuse/domestic violence prevention.

A question and answer period ensued.

In response to Commissioner Cannella, Ms. Gama will report back on his proposal for a Barber Training Program that the Probation Department had previously approved. In response to Commissioner Moore, Ms. Gama indicated that per a Department of Justice requirement, each of the Bureau Chiefs report on conditions at homes and facilities, and whether pepper spray is available to this staff as a self-defense tool. Ms. Gama will follow up.

Commissioner Moore suggested that the Reports should include (1) Complaints from minors; (2) Racial overtone problems; (3) Altercations; (4) Reportable Incidents; (5) Personnel grievances; and (6) Accomplishments.

Vice Chair Stathatos noted that group home/facility staff should always dress in an appropriate and professional manner. Ms. Gama suggested that as a result of field interviews, Commissioners can refer issues and concerns to the Ombudsman Office at 562/940-2515. Also, this dress code concern will be referred to the Director.

Ms. Gama advised that Paul Higa, Interim Director, has requested that she visit camps and homes to establish contact with minors. Also, Youth

Councils is an approach that is envisioned in the near future that address a parent-child unification goal.

Ms. Gama suggested that the Sybil Brand Commission Reports could be forwarded to the Probation Commission; this Commission also visits homes and camps with the intent to improve conditions.

Chair Montano asked Ms. Gama to review the Commission's field reports and offer any suggestions for improvement. Commissioner Moore recommended the use of Probation Department employees as ASL interpreters as a more cost effective approach when monitoring ADA compliance of homes with deaf/hearing impaired minors.

The Commission thanked Ms. Gama for her attendance and her interest in making a difference in the lives of minors.

Twila Kerr, Staff, reported that as requested the Group Home Report was updated: *Worker* was inserted in the information header above matrix #1 (copies were distributed). Commissioner Moore suggested that the Group Home Report include on page two, under Reason, the caption *Mental Health*, and that the caption *Mental Health* be added to Camp Reports under Medical Services.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Commissioner Moore reported that as a member of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, he attended a luncheon where the California Youth Authority Director outlined systemic problems to be addressed, and expressed dedication to effect changes in the CYA.

Vice Chair Stathatos provided a copy of a Los Angeles Times article on Founders (Mothers), an organization formed over the years by concerned mothers that have taken minors from the inner city on educational field trips.

Chair Montano reported that the Final Program Audit Report (Department of Auditor-Controller, Ombudsman) has been received.

## **FACILITY/GROUP INSPECTION REPORTS**

### **Moore's Cottage – 70#1**

Commissioners Stathatos and Cannella revisited this facility on February 24<sup>th</sup> and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**. Deficiencies were corrected and all audit requests were implemented.

### **Altadena Local Station**

Commissioners Stathatos and Cannella inspected this facility on February 28<sup>th</sup> and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**. The station was in immaculate condition. Commissioners were advised by Deputies that jail services routinely provides too much food for the number of trustees/inmates housed at this facility. Commissioners noted that there were only three trustees present on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Rites of Passage RC – 93#1**

Commissioner Moore indicated that he will inspect this facility tomorrow.

### **Turmont Home for Boys – #1**

Chair Montano revisited this facility on February 24<sup>th</sup> and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**. The only observed need was to restock the First Aid Kit.

### **Zenith Youth Home – 113#3**

Chair Montano attempted to inspect this facility on February 28<sup>th</sup> and found no one at home. Chair Montano noted that the Group Home Sites Directory needs current phone numbers to contact personnel regarding unanswered visits.

### **Girls and Boys Town of Southern California – #1**

Chair Montano inspected this facility on March 1, 2005 and gave a rating of **Satisfactory**. The only observed need was to restock the First Aid Kit.

**NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS, Future Facility/Group Home Visits**

Chair Montano assigned inspection duties to Commissioners for the following week.

Commissioner Moore reported that he is unable to attend the March 16, 2005 Regional Administrator's Meeting; Vice Chair Stathatos agreed to join Chair Montano at that meeting.

Due to the lack of a quorum, the Commission agreed to suspend the Commission meeting of March 16, 2005; Commissioners can conduct field inspections.

In response to Commissioner Moore, staff will again ask William Sias, Deputy County Counsel, for a status report on the use of cameras by Commissioners at field inspections.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

**MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA (To be presented and placed on a future agenda)**

There was none.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chair Montano adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

**Respectfully submitted,**

*Lee Millen*  
**Senior Staff**